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IS 502 Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry

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Syllabus

Course: IS502 W3 (SP 2009)
Title: Christian Formation: Vocation of Ministry
Hours: 3.00
Published: Yes, on 01/26/2009
Prerequisites:

None

Department: Integrative Studies
Faculty: Dr. Ellen Marmon



Email: ellen.marmon@asburyseminary.edu
 Office: FM
 SPO: 1307

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Wednesday from 6:15p to 9:00p in SH408.

Maximum Registration: 50

Catalog Description: This course seeks to ask and address the question, How is our vocation as those called to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained? The purpose of this course is to explore from a Wesleyan perspective the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood and vocation by examining the nexus between call to ministry and formation of persons in ministry.

Objectives:

IS502 - Vocation of Ministry
 Spring 2009

Ellen L. Marmon, Ph.D. Office Hours: Ellen_marmon@asburyseminary.edu W 1-4:30 pm,
 FM103, 859-858-2054 and by appointment

Ministry begins as we spend more time listening, rather than talking; accepting rather than judging; healing pain and hopes, rather than blaming; and reaching out together side by side into the world. Listening is the key. Walking together is the style. -- Jack Seymour

Course Description (highlights on our journey)

IS502 addresses the question, "How is a vocation to Christian ministry discerned, shaped, and sustained?" This course challenges us to explore, from a Wesleyan perspective, the biblical and theological foundations of Christian personhood (whose and who we are) and vocation (what we do; how we do it; and why).

Course Objectives (targets I aim for you to hit)

Having successfully completed this course, you should:

1. Understand the nature of Christian vocation, including God's call of all Christian disciples to ministry in the church and in the world.
2. Grasp the relationship between spiritual growth and theological reflection in the practice of ministry;
3. Demonstrate respect for and sensitivity to cultural, ethnic, age, and gender issues, especially with regard to their significance in ministry;
4. Understand the importance of a Christian's integrity and moral formation in ministry, clearly comprehending boundary issues related to ethical conduct;
5. Demonstrate commitment to a life of personal and social holiness through immersion in the means of grace and service;
6. Articulate a coherent narrative of your own call, God-given gifts and graces for ministry; and
7. Write a personal "Rule of Life" that guides and guards you in ministry.

Modes of Instruction (methods to help us learn)

You'll experience four main learning models in this class: first, we will meet together as one large group for instruction and interaction; second, you'll participate in covenant discipleship groups within the class that will explore Christian conduct and character; third, the discipleship groups will also participate in an assigned project, so you can experience directly some issues we study in class. Fourth, some of our communicating will occur on our Virtual class site through One ATS.

Required Textbooks (reading that forms and informs)

*Barton, Ruth (2006) *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, (195 pages).

*Dawn, Marva. (2006). *Sense of the Call*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing.

Grenz & Bell, (2001). *Betrayal of Trust: Confronting and Preventing Clergy Sexual Misconduct*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Guinness, O. (1998). *The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life*, Waco, TX: Word.

Pearcey, Nancy. (2004) *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Samson, Will & Lisa. (2007) *Justice in the Burbs: Being the Hands and Feet of Jesus Wherever You Live*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Roberts, Benjamin T. (1891; 1992). *Ordaining Women: Biblical and Historical Insights*. Indianapolis: Light and Life Press.

*New texts for Spring 09

Course Grading Criteria (standards to go by)

You'll find the following descriptions on p. 32 of your ATS Academic Catalog, 2006-2008:

A = exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives

B = Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C = Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives

D = Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives

F = Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

I'll calculate your course grade based on a 100-point scale:

95 - A 80 - B-

90 - A - 77.5 - C+

85 - B+ 75 - C

82.5 - B 72.5 - C-

Late Work

Assignments that you turn in late will receive a 1/3 reduction in grading, unless you contact me about a conflict before the due date.

Incomplete Work

The official end of each term is 4:00 pm on the last day of the examination schedule. This hour is the deadline for handing in all course work. Each instructor may set an earlier deadline for submission of any or all course work. The student must petition the faculty person involved and the student's advisor for permission to receive an "I" at the end of a semester. A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an unavoidable emergency, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of a course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F" (p. 32, 2006-2008 Academic Catalog).

Course Assignments (experiences to help things sink in)• **Spiritual Journey Paper**, Due March 11 (15 points)

Write a 3-5 page paper that reflects on parts of your spiritual journey in light of what we read and discussed during the first four weeks of class. You'll include values, calling, mission, and holiness as themes to guide your reflection, as well as Scripture, course texts, and insights from your DISC instrument. Since this is a personal paper, please write in first-person (I, me, my, etc.). Use 1-inch margins with 12-point type, double-spaced. Document your sources from within the paper, for example (Guinness, 32), and place your bibliography at the end - it does not count as one of your pages for the assignment, (portfolio piece).

• **Integrative/Creative Paper**, Due April 22 (15 points)

At the end of unit two, you have a choice as to whether you will write a 3-4 page integrative paper that answers the question: "How can a life of personal and social holiness help develop a life of integrity in ministry?" Your other option is to devise some creative alternative, such as a video, power point, visual display, poetry, short story, collage, etc. You'll need to clear your idea with me by March 18. Both will need to reflect the themes, readings and discussions of Units 1 and 2.

- Cross-Cultural Conversations and Reflection Paper, Due Apr. 29 (10 points)

During the semester you need to have two, 1-hour long conversations with someone who is culturally different than you are (race, ethnicity, socio-economic, physical/mental ability, etc.). In the first conversation, find out where this person was raised, how the family functioned, about the role of Christianity in their life. In the second conversation, talk about each other's call to ministry, how they evolved, who and what God used in your lives to get you to Asbury seminary. You'll write a 3-page paper that 1) summarizes what you discovered and 2) reflects on the differences and similarities in your spiritual journeys, (portfolio piece).

- Social Justice Project, May 6 (15 points)

Your group needs to find a project that you can do together outside of ATS. You must put yourself in a position to serve the poor and needy in the Wilmore or surrounding communities, spending approximately 5 hours together on the project. This will require some detective work on your part, contacting people connected with service-related agencies. I'll provide some suggestions in class. The group will then prepare one 3-4 page report that 1) describes your project, 2) lists the participants, 3) explains how this act of service connects theologically and biblically with the Kingdom of God, 4) shares three things that you learned as a result of this experience, (portfolio piece).

- Active participation in covenant group (5 points)

Each group member will attend and participate actively in your covenant group discussions. During the semester you will evaluate your group's interactions and the quality of each other's contributions to the forming of Christian community and group processing.

- Journaling for Sacred Rhythms, Due May 13 (10 points)

Each week, you'll read one chapter in Haley Barton's book and use her reflection suggestions, as well as weekly Scripture passages to write for 15-20 min. in a journal. At the end of the semester, you will turn that journal in and receive 1 point for each completed entry. Your last entry will be a review of the book's impact/meaning regarding your own spiritual journey.

- Rule of Life Paper, Due May 20 (30 points)

The central theme of your final paper will be "My Commitments to a Vision For Ministry." Drawing from all aspects of the class (Scripture, texts, discussions, group experience, cross-cultural conversations, journaling, guest speakers, etc.), write about your present vision for ministry which will evolve over time. Include your views about working in a multi-cultural world with persons of different ethnicity, gender, age, and socio-economic status than your own. Describe the personal, family, and institutional commitments you are willing to make and what you will put in place in your life to keep you on track to fulfill your calling to ministry ("Rule of Life" portfolio piece).

You'll create something for yourself that is concise, possibly 1-page, something that might sit on your desk or go on your computer. Then you'll include a 3-5 page explanation of your Rule of Life for me. That way I know how you connected what we discovered in class with what you've done for your ROL.

Covenant Discipleship Group Guidelines (forming community)

1. Because teamwork and spiritual formation are important parts of this course, I have built time for group work into our weekly schedule. That way you will rarely have to juggle your schedule to find a meeting time outside of class.
2. The groups will hold one introductory meeting. Then for the remainder of the semester the groups will focus on the chapters in Haley Barton's Sacred Rhythms, which explores the traditional Benedictine Rule of Life. Each of these chapters should be related to holiness of heart and life, both as a gift from God, and as your responsibility for growth in personal and social holiness. You are expected to contribute biblical references, resources from reading, and personal experiences that are directly related to the each subject for discussion.
3. Each group will be student lead. You will share leadership among all group members. Therefore, at the conclusion of each session a volunteer will offer to lead the next week's discussion.
4. In order to participate faithfully in group discussions, each group member should read in advance and journal about the chapter to be discussed. To prompt your reflections and writing, you'll use the exercise page at the end of each chapter, as well as the weekly Scripture passages provided in our syllabus.
5. Each group should commit to keep your conversations confidential among group members.
6. You will use a rubric in our class icon to evaluate participants' effectiveness in group processes.
7. Since our faith is tested and matured in community, your presence, participation, and attitude are critical to this being a meaningful and formative part of our class.

Weekly Overview

Unit 1: Holiness of Heart and Life - How Values Translate into Mission

Goals: At the completion of Unit 1, you should:

1. Have a clear understanding of core Christian values.
2. Articulate your personal core values and how they influenced your call to ministry, as well as your response to that call.
3. Relate your call to your understanding of the mission of God.

Feb. 11: The Value of Values in Life and Ministry

Exploring personal and Christian values in the context of holiness; forming covenant groups; learning about the "rule of life;" walking through the syllabus.

Covenant Group Focus: Introduce yourself by sharing some basic information. Then answer the question: How do my values relate to how I got to seminary and how will my values guide my future ministry? From now on, you'll discuss one chapter in Sacred Rhythms, having already completed the "suggestions for reflection" at the end of each reading.

NOTE: The reading listed with each class session needs to be completed by that date.

Feb. 18: Calling

We'll continue our explorations of values and discuss the discernment process in a call to ministry

Reading: Guinness, Ch. 1-7

Pearcey, Intro and Chpt. 1

Barton, Intro and Chapter 1

Dawn, Introduction

I Samuel 3; Luke 3-4; Acts 6: 1-7

Covenant Group Focus: Invitation to a Journey

Individual Assignment: Arrange a time for your first cross-cultural conversation soon!

Feb. 25: A Theological Look at Call and Vocation

We'll dig into what theology (Wesleyan) has to do with our call, as well as personal vocational strengths, abilities, and spiritual gifts.

Reading: Guinness, Ch. 8-14

Dawn, Chpt. 1

Pearcey, Chpt. 2

Projective Assessment: "DiSC " (bring your completed print-out to class)

Covenant Group Focus: DiSC and relationships (ministry, family, friends, etc.)

Mar. 4: God's Mission: It's Not About You; Then Again, It Is

To complete this unit, we'll discover the importance of calling for all people to participate in God's worldwide mission. We'll also hear a powerful word from Dr. Rick Gray, "Ethnic Realities in America."

Reading: Guinness, Chpt. 15-21

Pearcey, Chpt. 3

Foster, Chpt. on "Service" from Celebration of Discipline (handout)

Barton, Chpt. 2

Dawn, Chpt. 2

Individual Assignment: First cross-cultural conversation completed by this date.

Covenant Group Focus: Solitude. Also, discuss how the readings and interactions of these last four weeks have shaped your understanding of call.

Means of assessment: Spiritual Journey Paper due March 11.

Unit 2: Holiness of Heart and Life - Integrity Matters.

This unit focuses on the importance of Christian virtues, character, and morals as key components of Christian integrity.

Goals

At the completion of this module, you should:

1. Understand the relationship between virtue, ethics, and the fruit of the Spirit;
2. Develop a list of personal Christian virtues for prayer and practice;
3. Understand the importance of moral behavior that leads to a life of integrity;
4. Formulate a theological understanding of temptation;
5. Be receptive to the gift of the Holy Spirit and develop some guides for the process of growth in a life of personal and social holiness.

Mar. 11: Christian Virtues

We'll investigate the influence of the classic virtues as well as those 7 annoying and deadly sins on Christian integrity. How do Christian virtues relate to the fruit of the Spirit, and life of holiness?

Reading: Guinness, Chpt. 22-26

Pearcey, Chpt. 3

Barton, Chpt. 3
 Dawn, Chpt. 3
 Grenz & Bell, 1 & 2

(For your future library, I also recommend Maxie Dunnam's two workbooks on The Virtues and Fruit; and The Seven Deadly Sins - very accessible stuff)
 Covenant Group Focus: Scripture
 Individual Assignment: Spiritual Journey Paper

Mar. 18: Calling and Character
 This session will focus on character formation for Christian leaders.
 Reading: Pearcey, Chpt. 5
 Dawn, Chpt. 4 & 5
 Grenz & Bell, Chpt. 3 & 4
 Wesley's "The Character of a Methodist" (handout)
 Barton, Chpt. 4

Covenant Group Focus: Prayer

Mar. 25 - Meet in Covenant Groups for 45 minutes only. Watch video lecture via our Virtual site on One ATS.

Apr. 8 and Apr. 15: Morality in Christian Leadership
 These sessions will focus on the dynamics of temptation and the dangers of the misuse of power. Dr. Steve Martyn will share from his experiences as the spiritual director for the Kentucky Annual Conference. We'll also explore the roles of physical, mental, relational and spiritual health related to integrity.
 Reading: Grenz & Bell, Chpt. 5 - 8
 Dawn, Chpt. 6
 Pearcey, Chpt. 6 and 7
 Barton, Chpt. 5 and 6
 Genesis 37-50 (Joseph)
 Covenant Group Focus: Self-Examination and Discernment
 Means of Evaluation for Unit 2: Integrative/Creative Paper, due Apr. 22

Unit 3: Commitment to a Vision for Ministry.
 The purpose of our last unit is to help you create a vision for future ministry and to understand the commitments necessary to realize this vision.

Goals:

1. Understand the relationship between the kind of person you want to be and the work you want to do.
2. Decide on the commitments you are making to yourself, others and institutions.
3. Formulate an understanding of ministry from a theology of mission
4. Integrate all ten points of the Rule of Life matrix for a vocation of ministry.

Apr. 22: Formulating a vision for a vocation of ministry
 This class will be a discussion of the importance of discernment in creating a vision for the kind of person you want to be and the specific forms of ministry you want to do in order to fulfill the call to ministry.
 Required Reading: Dawn, Chpt. 7
 Pearcey, Chpt. 8
 Roberts, Chpt. 1-7
 Barton, Chpt. 7
 Samson's story in Judges

Covenant Group Focus: Honoring the Body
 Individual Assignment: Integrative/Creative Paper

Apr. 29 and May 6: Commitments
 We'll examine personal, social and institutional commitments we are willing to make in order to live a life of Christian ministry. These commitments include God, others (regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status), and institutions.
 Reading: Pearcey, Chpt. 9 - 12
 Roberts, Chpt. 8-17 (they're short, so don't pass out!)
 Barton, Chpt. 8 and 9
 Gen 12:1-3; Acts 10:28-35; Exodus 23:1-9; Leviticus 19

Covenant Group Focus: Sabbath and Rule of Life
 Group Assignment: Social Justice Project Report (due May 6)
 Individual Assignment: Cross-Cultural Reflection (due Apr. 29)

May 13: Ministry

We'll review various forms of ministry that we can choose to fulfill our calling (or that God chooses for us), as well as critical thinking and ministry. Our last class together will also incorporate themes and principles from all previous sessions, pointing us to the purpose of our call, and the creation of a life of personal and social holiness, so that we may participate faithfully in God's mission to the world. We'll share in a season of prayer and blessing.

Reading:

Pearcey, Chpt. 13

I John 1: 1-17

Individual Assignment: Journal due (10 entries)

Means of Evaluation for Unit 3

Rule of Life paper, due May 20 (30 points).

The central theme of your final paper will be "My Commitments to a Vision of Ministry." Drawing from all aspects of the class (Scripture, texts, discussions, group experience, cross-cultural conversations, journaling, guest speakers, etc.), write about your present vision for ministry (this, of course, will evolve over time). Include your views about working in a multi-cultural world with persons of different ethnicity, gender, age, and socio-economic status than your own. Describe the personal, family, and institutional commitments you are willing to make, and what you will put in place in your life to keep you on track to fulfill your calling in ministry. (Portfolio piece)

You'll create something for yourself that is concise, possibly 1-page, something that might sit on your desk or go on your computer. Then you'll include a 1-2 page explanation of your Rule of Life for me. That way I know how you connected what we discovered in class with what you've done for your ROL.